

Help Bishopston have the voice it deserves by becoming a member!

As a member you would receive two newsletters a year and be consulted on local issues. We hold two public meetings a year with plenty of topical discussion. Depending on your interests, you are also welcome to join the committee or become involved with its work and activities. We are currently developing a web site, which will widen opportunities for involvement and our range of activities

Application for Membership and Renewal Form

Name (Please print)

Address (please print)

Telephone (evenings & week-ends)

e-mail (please print)

Signature

Subscriptions - cheques should be made payable to The Bishopston Society: £5 per annum for individuals or / £7 per annum for two adults living at the same address

Please return this form & fee to: Richard Farrow, 25 Monmouth Road, Bishopston, BS7 8LF - If you require a receipt, please request. Your details will be held on a database for contact purposes.

If you have new neighbours, perhaps you could let them know about us. For extra copies of the Newsletter ring (0117) 9445687

The Bishopston Society



THE BISHOPSTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER August 2008

This issue includes:

- Recent Planning News
- Residents Parking Scheme Update
- Sefton Park School Expansion
- Bishop Road Playing Field

Our Next Public Meeting: AGM, 7.30, Monday Sept. 15th at St. Michael's Church Hall on Pigsty Hill

The Bishopston Society promotes high standards of planning and architecture in and around Bishopston, education in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area and aims to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest.

Over 80 people attended a meeting about the Gloucester Road

If you were not at our public meeting in April or haven't read our regular up-date in "Bishopston Matters", you might not know it was a great success! Photographs of the area showing interesting features and good design along with some recent planning proposals were displayed to promote discussion at the meeting. Peter Westbury, a planning officer from Bristol City Council Planning, gave a very useful talk about planning and the future of the Gloucester Road. He referred to the "unique" character of the Gloucester Road that "should be cherished". He said that Government and local planning policies support maintaining shops and a sustainable approach of mixed uses geared to local residents. Planners are now being encouraged to be "pro-active", being both receptive to developers' proposals for new investment but at the same time engaging more with local communities as set out in "The Statement of Community Involvement". The Chair, Chris McConnell, and Nigel Tibbs gave a brief up-date of the recent work and progress of The Bishopston Society. Richard Farrow the Treasurer reported on the finances which were in good health. (We currently have 170 members). There was also an up-date from Ian Baker about local initiatives being promoted by Sustainable Bishopston. In addition to neighbourhood transport (see below), initiatives included sale of fruit trees, encouraging reduction in the use of plastic bags and a sense of sustainability in primary school children. In a brief "open forum" at the end of the meeting, other issues included the closure of the Bishop Road School playing field which for years has served as an important space for community and family recreation

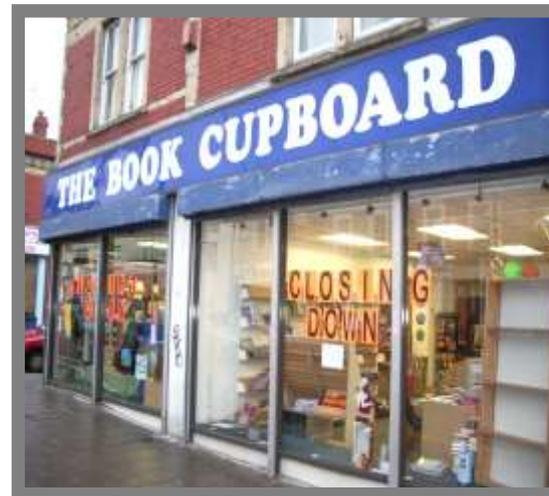


The good attendance and lively discussion generated at the meeting demonstrated the value of a forum and the need for communication between the City Council and other parties such as developers, traders and local residents. The point was made several times about the lack of information and local consultation about planning and other matters. Peter Westbury's presentation should however give some encouragement that the Planners'

(and hopefully the Council's) position is changing. Certainly it is worth developing a community perspective of the Gloucester Road, with a steady stream of planning applications we are being invited to comment upon.

Use It or Lose It –An Obituary for The Book Cupboard.

We were going to feature The Book Cupboard in our "Spotlight on the Gloucester Road" in this edition. Sadly the shop closed in March –a



reminder that all is not well with some independent shops in this area. Firstly it has to be said that independent bookshops are having a hard time generally with Clifton Bookshop also recently closing. The family that ran The Book Cupboard originally started a pet shop on the other side of the road. They got involved with children's books through running a "Bring and Buy sale" promoted by the BBC "Blue Peter" programme. They became a book shop and took over Cooks Travel Agents shop and in 1995 moved down

the road to where they were last. Despite their best efforts, one got the sense even as a customer that it was a struggle for them to survive in the face of increasing competition and the Internet.

As we reported last year, they were in favour of the proposed Storegap (Sainsburys) supermarket which the manager thought could only give a lift and bring more shoppers to this section of the Gloucester Road. The manager was very sceptical about the Bogoff campaign against Storegap and how much his shop was used by those supporting the campaign. (It has been remarked that we can be inconsistent about our shopping in terms of our sentiments and our actual behaviour!).

What is worrying is that there do appear to be a small but increasing number of other vacant shops before and after the Ashley Down traffic lights. No doubt supermarkets elsewhere, especially Tesco's in Golden Hill, (which have just been refused planning permission to extend their sales area to include "white goods") have made it more difficult for these shops. Maybe we have to come to terms with the fact that a long stretch of road cannot support the same number of shops that it did 100 years ago - even in Bishopston.

The Refurbishment of Bristol North Baths

Planning permission has been granted for the refurbishment of the Bristol North Baths Building to accommodate a local GP practice and NHS community services. The site will also include a new library (to replace Cheltenham Road), flats and a public toilet in part of the car park. The Society has supported the Resource Pool Group in being critical of Bristol City Council for their lack of consultation and the way in which this major project has been handled. We are disappointed that there is no affordable housing included in this development and there will be additional car parking pressures created. However it represents a long term and viable use for the baths building, an excellent location for a library and the new development will undoubtedly enhance the appearance of this part of the Gloucester Road. The refurbishment and development was due to start this summer but it has been reported that there could now be a delay. Resource Pool have applied for a judicial review in regard to the planning decision to redevelop the Cheltenham Rd library site. (The library would be relocated alongside the refurbished baths and the viability of the two sites is inextricably linked). Resource Pool arranged a meeting near the end of July to review their position and the Bristol North Baths scheme which they think is not deliverable.

Removal of Lamp Posts

Dave Cemlyn from St. Andrews has done a great service to the area in achieving publicity and some embarrassment to the City Council by his stand in June about the removal of older lampposts (by handcuffing himself to one) which are being transferred to Conservation Areas. (There has long been a case for parts of Bishopston and St. Andrews to be designated as Conservation areas). The City Council has agreed to halt and review its programme of replacing older streets lights with taller, brighter modern ones. This has been going on for some time without any local consultation. Part of the reasoning behind this has been to reduce crime, although this is not supported by recent Home Office research. The Bishopston Society has added its voice by expressing our concern in a letter to the leader of Bristol City Council, local Councillors and our MP Stephen Williams.



Recent Planning News

Bristol Planning Officer, Peter Westbury, made clear at our public meeting in April that the City Council is committed to listening to the views of local residents and representative groups like the Bishopston Society. The Society is a member of the Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network which has worked with the city planners to agree "The Statement of Community Involvement". This network of neighbourhood groups in Bristol has also helped to establish a much needed procedure for consultation between developers and communities before major planning applications are submitted.

With the pressure of infilling and development of small sites in this area, the Society is seeking to raise standards of good design. More thought on all sides (ie the planners, developers and local communities) needs to be given to the possibilities of higher standards of design and development in the context of local streets and the character of Bishopston. We are fortunate in having an experienced local architect who is able to provide independent and constructive advice to the Committee.

As well as approval of the baths refurbishment/redevelopment (discussed elsewhere), planning permission has also been given for the redevelopment of St Bonaventure's Primary School. All are agreed about the need to redevelop the School. However the site is surrounded on most sides by housing and there are concerns, particularly with the likely length of time of reconstruction. Many conditions are attached to the planning permission and proposals need developing now that minimise disruption to the school and wider community during the different phases of construction.

A proposal for flat and town housing development at 78 Claremont Road (at the corner of Elton Road ie the disused garages and Claremont Road) that was refused planning permission by the City Council has been allowed on an appeal made by the developer. The Government Inspector's report published in June did not accept the main arguments used by the planning committee to refuse the application nor local concerns about parking. The decision of the Inspector is a blow particularly to the local residents who put in considerable time and resources to oppose the proposal. It is understood that the Storegap (Sainsbury's) proposal that was refused planning in the autumn is being revised to attempt to overcome the delivery and transport objections on Ashley Down Road. There have been a series of other applications, some seeking redevelopment of small fairly derelict sites that can have an impact on immediate neighbours. One current application involves three disused garages at the end of the garden of 32 Berkeley Road.

Residents Parking Scheme- an Update

RIn the autumn newsletter we reported on Bristol City Council's plan to introduce a new residents parking scheme that will ring the city centre. Residents in the designated zone are now being consulted and it is planned to pilot groups of streets which support the scheme in late 2009. This is clearly a politically sensitive area and many practical details have to be thrashed out, not least how it would work with local shopping areas where nearby streets are used for parking during the day. There could be positive effects for the areas inside the zone, but The Bishopston Society has expressed its concerns about the effects on our area which is mainly on the edge of the proposed zone but not included in consultations. The scheme could lead to many city centre commuters simply driving around to park as near to the edge of the zone as possible (reaching Somerville Road on the east side of the Gloucester Road and somewhat lower down on the west). This will create great inconvenience to local residents, more traffic pollution and possibly lead to more people paving over their front gardens (although this is illegal if your front garden is below a minimum size).

Sefton Park School Expansion

SIn response to the urgent need for more local primary school places, a new school was planned to be built on the old Brunel College site. However these plans were abandoned and it is proposed to expand Sefton Park School.



This would include demolition of the large Victorian house next to the school which has led to an application to English Heritage by SAVE to get Ashley House listed. These proposals have led to strong local objections ranging from the drawbacks of a larger school to the practicalities of expansion in a restricted site which suffers poor access and parking. A feasibility study is being undertaken by the Education Authority with public

consultation planned over the summer, although information and consultation has been notably absent until recently. Several Governor and parent meetings have taken place. Go to

<http://www.AshleyGrangeResidentsOrganisation.co.uk> for the latest information.

There is an e-petition, organised by parents, on the council's website:

<http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/view/seftonparkexpansion>

News in Brief

Horfield Organic Community Orchard

Set up on overgrown allotment land, the Orchard now contains over 80 apple, pear, plum and nut trees plus soft fruit. The orchard has received an "Awards for All" grant of £5000 which is to be spent on a compost loo, landscaping the car park, extending the polytunnel and other improvements. **The next event is on Sunday 19th October 2-4pm.** Contact Pauline 0117 9248124 (day) or Helena 9756614 (evening).



Sustainable Bishopston:

Sustainable Bishopston has obtained a grant of £3500 from Bristol City Council's Neighbourhood Transport Initiative. The grant will be used in collaboration with the Council to install up to 25 bike stands along the Gloucester Road. The number of cyclists using this road for shopping and other trips is increasing and the initiative will help to provide secure parking which is so often a problem for cyclists in Bristol. It will also involve working with local shops, people and organisations to promote information about sustainable travel (including a noticeboard) and other provision for cycle stands. Contact: martin.fodor@blueyonder.co.uk

Bristol: First Cycling City: Talking of pedal-power, it's good to see Bristol (and part of South Gloucestershire) for once see off other cities and become the country's first "cycling city". It is to receive £11.4m to make the city more cycling friendly, although ("a sting in the tail!") this has to be matched by funding from the local authorities. It will take a year to work up the plan but is likely to involve not only improving existing facilities (e.g. lighting on the Bristol to Bath cycle Path) but new initiatives such as a Paris-style on-street bike hire scheme. The plan is to get many more people using bikes including training in more deprived areas and dedicated cycle ways linking suburbs to the city centre.

Post Office Closure: The Derby Road Post Office is now closed but the shop is still open as a convenience store. Elderly and disabled people especially will lose out. Increasing lack of facilities in this area and parts of Ashley Down Rd mean that less mobile residents have to drive or face walking up hills to reach shops and services.

From the Chair...

Graffiti: Returning home on a Saturday evening recently, we noticed a man in blue overalls removing fly-posters which had been affixed here and there on Gloucester Road. I paused to say how pleased I was to see this. I was told that this was his regular job on weekend evenings – he is employed by the City Council Graffiti Department. He kindly explained to me the basic illegal aspects behind this nuisance and the length of time it takes to trace the perpetrators who, of course, are taking advantage of free advertising.



Whereas those posters which are pasted are not easily removed, those this person was removing are stuck on with bluetack and I have seen this being done during the day. They didn't stay fixed for long....

“The Big Bristol Drink Debate – it’s your shout”

This was the title of a questionnaire that was offered to us at www.bristolpartnership.org until the end of April 2008. Perhaps this is the time to think again about the Bristol City Council Licensing Policy which came into effect in January 2008. The aim of the policy is to ensure the carrying out of “the licensing objectives”:

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public Safety
- Prevention of crime and nuisance
- Protection of children from harm (guidance is used by the Secretary of State)

The Licensing Policy does not apply solely to premises having licence to sell alcohol (including shops, clubs and restaurants) but, interestingly to fly posting and nuisance advertising, exhibiting films in cinemas and other premises and also the supply of illegal drugs.

Therefore many different aspects of social practices are involved, and it is incumbent on all of us to support “basic objectives” stated above. As far as the supplying of alcohol is concerned in Bishopston, in recent times the only major intervention I have been able to trace was the temporary closure of premises used by post-match sports supporters who caused unacceptable disturbance. Obviously there are “negative aspects of increase in noise, nuisance and anti social behaviour,” which the policy seeks to control. Do these appear to be on the increase locally? The “Drink Debate” questionnaire puts forward several suggested statements to add to controls on the purchase of alcohol such as the promotion of lower – strength products, with which respondents may agree/disagree.

Would this have the desired outcome, i.e. more restricted effect on the consumer? Together with the possible knock-on effect of “healthier” long term habits. Many of us would strongly support the aspects of the policy that attempts to protect younger people. The debate lately has, I think, been influenced by the reported unacceptable behavior of young British tourists. Maybe it will lead us to the promotion of health education in schools etc.

Meanwhile nearly 1000 questionnaires were returned with a good mix in age, gender and ethnicity. The results will soon be published and will help to inform the review of Bristol City’s Licensing strategy. If you have any thoughts about the licensing, do contact us about them.

Chris McConnell.

Bishop Road Playing Field

There is increasing concern about the loss of the Bishop Road playing field for public use. This field has been enjoyed by local residents and families since it was first created in the mid 1960's. Especially we are now in the summer months there are now more children having to play football and other games in nearby streets. There is also evidence of children trying to climb over the spiked railings into the field. If you are concerned about the closure of the school field and wish to explore what can be done about it, get in touch with Chrissie Savage:

chrissie.savage@blueyonder.co.uk or 0117 9421745.

The financial year of The Bishopston Society commences on the 1st July and subscriptions for 2008/9 are now due. Please use form on back page to renew.

The Current Bishopston Society Committee

Chair: Chris McConnell Nigel Tibbs
Secretary: Rose Boswell Joanna Towner
Treasurer: Dick Farrow Lionel White
Ian Donaldson

Neil Embleton and Chrissie Savage have been co-opted since October 2007. Society members are invited to put themselves forward or nominate others to join the Committee and increase its range of skills and interests. Voluntary support is also needed (eg updating and maintaining the web site).

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E-mail: bishopstonsociety@blueyonder.co.uk

Hop on a train!

As summer is hopefully going to arrive soon, why not think of making use of the Severn Beach Line? Did you know that this line (according to First



Great Western web site) is rated by Thomas Cook as one of the most scenic railways in Europe? From Montpellier or Redland Station you can get a quick and reliable service to Severn Beach. You can of course reach other

stations along the line, most importantly Temple Meads which is not served well by buses. Especially outside the rush hours, you can be sure of taking a bike on board.

The timetable has been improved by a 40 minute service largely thanks to the campaigning efforts of the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways.(FOSBR). FOSBR and supporters would like to see more radical improvements to the local network, such as the reopening of Ashton Gate station and extending the Severn Beach Line. This would enhance certain areas in Bristol and together with other improvements link the north and the south of the city. FOSBR would eventually like to see all closed stations in Greater Bristol reopened leading to reinstated and improved passenger services including the Portishead line. This all makes good sense in a time of rising petrol prices, road congestion and the need to reduce CO2. However FOSBR maintain that despite recent improvements and the possibilities of doing much more, services are still in danger of being cut back.

Timetables can be obtained from local manned stations, libraries or contact Lionel (0117 9445687) or go to: www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/ For further information about FOSBR go to www.fosbr.org.uk/

Are you concerned about ever increasing numbers of homes being built over the next 18 years in Bristol? Your chance to respond!

The Government is producing a Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West, looking forward to 2026, attempting to reconcile a number of often conflicting considerations including the need for economic growth, likely population growth and housing need, transport and quality of the environment. Ministers are now proposing that Bristol should find space for 36,500 more homes over the next 18years, that's 6,500 more than was previously proposed by Bristol.

In the past Bristol might have been resistant to allowing a lot more housing where there were clearly opportunities, such as south of the city. However, it is now accepted by some local politicians and to a lesser extent the public that development and change is necessary if Bristol is to continue to flourish. Some of us at least accept the need to build more housing, although other measures also need to be in place to ensure that a reasonable proportion is affordable and meets local people's needs. More tightly compact cities, again with other measures in place, can offer opportunities in sustainable living and greater use of public transport

The latest Government proposals increase the likelihood of urban sprawl, unacceptably high densities and more major roads (such as the extension of the ring road in South Bristol). This threatens to make Bristol an unattractive place to live and work. For areas like Bishopston, it could mean even more "town cramming".

The Bishopston Society is a member of the Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network that met Bristol planners over the summer to discuss their core strategy and the implications of these latest Government proposals for Bristol. The Society intends to object to these proposals but would like to hear from you.

The deadline to reply to the current Government housing proposals for Bristol is 17th October 2008. To read the strategy report and take the opportunity to make comments, go to <http://gosw.limehouse.co.uk/portal> or pass any comments onto our e-mail address or contact me (0117 9249586). The Bristol City Council web site (go to "Environment and Planning" and then "Planning Development Framework") has useful links to the Government web site and provides a background to Bristol's progress in its "core strategy".

Nigel Tibbs